DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 409 930 JC 970 394

AUTHOR Summers, Michael D.
TITLE Improving Student Learning--The Impact of State and Accreditation Standards.
PUB DATE Apr 97
NOTE 39p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Association of Community Colleges (77th, Anaheim, CA, April 12-15, 1997).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Accountability; *Accreditation (Institutions); Administrator Attitudes; College Planning; Community Colleges; *Educational Improvement; *Educational Practices; Educational Quality; *Institutional Mission; Mission Statements; Organizational Development; Standards; Strategic Planning; Teacher Attitudes; *Two Year College Students; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS Illinois

ABSTRACT

Discussing an increased emphasis on accountability and assessment of student learning in the Illinois community colleges, this paper reviews efforts by two community colleges to improve student learning on their campuses. Following an overview of the literature addressing the paradigm shift at community colleges from teaching- to learning-centered institutions, the development of Illinois' system for accountability in learning is discussed and accountability requirements are examined for Illinois colleges to achieve accreditation through the North Central Association (NCA). Next, responses are discussed from interviews conducted with 16 administrators and faculty at two rural Illinois community colleges regarding their perceptions of progress made to improve student learning. Reviews are also provided of the following documents obtained from the two colleges: the mission statement, continuous quality improvement goal statements, strategic long-range plans, program reviews, and NCA-approved assessment plans. Finally, the following conclusions are presented: (1) the project found evidence, statewide, of a trend toward greater accountability; (2) staff interviewed at both of the colleges indicated a greater attention to student learning currently than in the past, with one college focusing on outcomes assessment and documenting student learning and the other focusing on adopting a learner-centered focus; and (3) although student learning appeared to be receiving more attention, a complete paradigm shift has not yet been achieved. Contains 41 references. (TGI)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 409 930

Research Project

Improving Student Learning - The Impact of State and Accreditation Standards

Michael D. Summers

VOTEC 442 - The Community College

University of Illinois

Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Association of Community Colleges (77th, Anaheim, CA, April 12-15, 1997)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M. D. Summers

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

JC 970 394

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

At the national level, the decade of the 1990s has produced an increasing amount of literature and activities associated with the concept of improving student learning in the American community college. Some examples of this focus in the literature include Harlacher and Gollattscheck (1992) and Gabelnick, MacGregor, Matthews and Smith (1990) who write about the positive effects of learning communities; the Wingspread Group (1993) which reported that higher education needed to place student learning as a top priority; Kuh, Douglas, Lund and Ramin-Gyurnek (1994) who advocate increasing student learning by focusing on the time students spend outside of the classroom; and Love and Love (1995) who promote the integration of a student's social and emotional processes with the intellectual processes as a way of enhancing student learning. Moreover, one of the more respected and widely-known experts in the community college field, Terry O'Banion, has also focused much of his recent attention and writing on improving student learning. He and several other community college leaders, scholars, and researchers articulate compelling reasons for community colleges to shift their focus--or paradigm--from that of teaching-centered institutions to learning-centered institutions (O'Banion, 1994, 1995, 1996; Barr & Tagg, 1995; Boggs, 1996). What exactly does this mean? Which--if any--community colleges are doing this and how are they accomplishing it?

On a statewide scale, Illinois community colleges during the past several years have witnessed an increased emphasis on accountability and assessment of student learning (Illinois Board of Higher Education, 1992). Indeed, the requirements for regional accreditation have been modified and Illinois' formal system of educational program assessment for community colleges has been significantly modified. It would appear to this student that these changes imposed upon Illinois community colleges will have a positive effect on improving student learning. Does this

mean that there is a shift in focus from teaching to learning in Illinois community colleges? Is it related to the shift described by O'Banion and other experts?

This descriptive research project is intended to provide answers to the questions posed above within the context of the Illinois public community college system. More specifically, the purpose of this study is to describe how two Illinois community colleges are addressing the improvement of student learning on their campuses. In addition, as part of this research project I will provide (a) an explanation and overview of the literature addressing the paradigm shift from teaching-centered to learning-centered community colleges, (b) an explanation of the development of the Illinois community college system for accountability in student learning, (c) a description of the accountability required of Illinois colleges to achieve regional accreditation through the North Central Association with regard to student learning, and (d) a description of responses related to the notion of shifting from a teaching to a learning focus given by college officials interviewed at two Illinois community colleges.

The American community college has frequently been associated with teaching. Less than a decade ago, Ernest Boyer declared in the highly publicized "Building Communities" report that "the community college should be the nation's premier teaching institution" (Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, 1988, p. 25). To be sure, the community college literature is full of references to the importance of teaching in the community college. Barr (1993) suggests that the predominant paradigm for community colleges is that they are teaching institutions whose purpose is to provide instruction, not to produce learning. "The method is the product . . . under the current paradigm, faculty are primarily sages on stages" (p. 1).

Some suggest that one major reason for the continued teaching focus is that many community colleges attend to meeting the needs of their employees before the needs of their students. Nearly twenty years ago, in a speech at the League of Innovation for Community Colleges Conference in 1978, K. Patricia Cross spoke about the amount of higher education which exists primarily to meet administrative and fiscal requirements, rather than existing to enhance student learning. Similarly, today O'Banion (1996) argues, "[community colleges] accommodate the needs, interests, and values of their employees more often than the needs, interests, and values of their customers" (p. 19). Myran, Zeiss and Howdyshell (1995) also support this reasoning in their work advocating a new model of learner-centered leadership which represents a change from the "academic tradition that insists, whether admitted or not, that staff preferences take precedence over student or community needs" (p. 5).

Another major reason cited as support for the teaching paradigm relates to funding. As an example--which could be considered typical for many states-- Boggs (1996) reported that the California community college system awards institutional funding based upon how many students are enrolled in classes at "census week." Whether students finish or learn anything is irrelevant to the funding process. Given this funding reality, it is easy to understand why colleges would tend to concentrate on recruiting instead of student learning. A similar situation holds true for the Illinois community college funding system. That is, credit hour grants are awarded to institutions based upon student enrollment on the tenth day of the semester; not according to student learning or completion of courses, programs, and/or degrees. Yet regardless of these major reasons serving to support the teaching paradigm, there is growing attention in community colleges for shifting their focus and paradigm to student learning.

How does the education literature define paradigm? Barr (1993) defines paradigms as "sets of rules that establish boundaries and lay out what should be done to be successful within those boundaries; they map the world and help predict its behavior" (p. 1). A simpler definition is offered by K. Patricia Cross (cited in O'Banion, 1995), "Paradigm shift is the academic term for changed perspectives, and restructuring or re-engineering is the corporate term" (p. 143). Whichever definition we use, a paradigm shift in community college focus from teaching to learning has the potential to affect many parts of the institution, especially accountability and assessment.

Barr and Tagg (1995) offer a comprehensive comparison of the differences between a teaching (instructional) paradigm and a learning paradigm. For example, they say that the instructional paradigm assumes that the mission of the college is to provide instruction; to teach. The learning paradigm says the college's mission is to produce learning and use of the word "produce" connotes that the college takes responsibility for learning. In fact, under the learning paradigm, the goal for all students becomes not simply access but success. "A learning paradigm college . . . aims for ever-higher graduation rates while maintaining or even increasing learning standards" (p. 15). "The learning paradigm also opens up the truly inspiring goals that each graduating class learns more than the previous graduating class" (p. 14), implying that the institution itself is a learner; over time it continuously learns how to produce more learning.

Under the instructional paradigm we define quality in terms of inputs and process measures while the learning paradigm incorporates the perspectives of the assessment movement. To illustrate their point, Barr and Tagg (1995) say, "It would make more sense to find a college on the number of math problems students solve, for example, than to find it on the number of

students who sit in Math classes" (p. 18). They contend that any system based upon assessment of outcomes is better than one based on inputs and processes.

In terms of teaching and learning structures, Barr and Tagg (1995) say the instructional paradigm typically utilizes the 50-minute lecture, three credit hour class, and one teacher-one classroom approach. O'Banion (1997) agrees, saying "Herding students through one-hour sessions daily in high schools and three days a week in college flies in the face of everything known about how learning occurs" (p. 7). In fact, almost 15 years ago the National Education Commission on Time and Learning (1993) proclaimed, "Learning in America is a prisoner of time. For the past 150 years, American public schools have held time constant and let learning vary . . . Time is learning's warden" (p. 7). Clearly, the instructional paradigm says that the teaching and learning process is governed by the rule that time will be held constant while learning varies. However, ". . . the learning paradigm requires a constant search for new structures and methods that work better for student learning and success, and expects even these to be redesigned continually and to evolve over time" (p. 19). In the learning paradigm college, the degree would not represent time spent and credit hours accumulated, but would certify that the student had demonstrated specific knowledge and skills.

Finally, Barr and Tagg (1995) say that in terms of the nature of roles, the instructional paradigm has faculty primarily as disciplinary experts who impart knowledge by lecturing. The learning paradigm has faculty as primarily the designers of learning environments; they study and apply best methods for producing learning and student success. Teamwork and shared governance over time replace the line governance and independent work of the instructional paradigm's hierarchical and competitive organization. Concerning the differences between the

teaching and learning paradigms, O'Banion (1996) concludes, "There is nothing inherently wrong with placing great value on teaching except that it has led to placing more value on teaching than learning" (p. 19).

A number of factors are cited by Boggs (1996) which serve as compelling reasons for community colleges making a paradigm shift to learning: (a) demographic changes in the community college student, (b) the need for changes in how faculty are evaluated, and (c) changes in how productivity is measured on campuses. Boggs maintains that demographic changes in the students that community colleges serve are bringing into question the traditional instructional methodology. He cites as examples: more students speak a second language, more have part-time or full-time jobs, many have family responsibilities, some have been laid off or are changing careers, some have physical disabilities, many are coming back to school after many years away and do not feel comfortable, and many students are not academically prepared. He thinks identification with the process of teaching rather than the outcomes of student learning serves to limit colleges to rather traditional instructional methodology.

With regard to evaluation, Boggs (1996) contends that the mission of the community college should be student learning, and "we should measure our effectiveness based upon student learning outcomes" (p. 25). The most important people in the college are the learners. Under the old teaching paradigm, some teachers go so far as to measure quality by the percent of students who drop their courses. In this environment evaluation is based on how well teachers teach, not how well the students learn. Boggs says that in the teaching paradigm faculty members have been trained by example that they are to provide instruction and to grade students. Administrators hire and evaluate teachers based upon how well they present material. However,

under the new learning paradigm, employees at the college should be evaluated based upon their contributions to student learning.

Finally, Boggs (1996) says productivity for community colleges under the teaching paradigm is defined as the cost per credit hour of instruction per student. Or stated in another way, the number of weekly contact hours with students per full-time equivalent faculty member. There are only two ways to increase productivity in this situation: increase class sizes or increase faculty teaching loads. However, productivity under the learning paradigm can be defined as the cost per unit of learning per student. In this situation, for example, one of the many ways to increase productivity is the use of technology in innovative and appropriate ways to increase student learning. It is interesting to note that Barr and Tagg (1995) say that "There is no more powerful feedback than revenue. Nothing could facilitate a shift to the learning paradigm more swiftly than funding learning and outcomes rather than hours of instruction" (p. 23). To that end, O'Banion (1996) advocates, "A major goal of the learning college is to create as many learning options as possible in order to provide successful learning experiences for all learners" (p. 22).

Victor, Jensen, Cook and Taylor (1997), presenters at the first annual Learning Paradigm Conference, contend that a shift in focus from the instructor to the student does not mean having to completely abandon the instructional paradigm; a post-modernism outlook would support multiple paradigms. "The fastest way to move into the learning paradigm will be to give initial emphasis to our own learning--as educational change agents--and pilot models of future educational systems for ourselves and others. Possibly the greatest difficulty contemporary educators will have in adopting the learning paradigm will be to resist teaching others and keeping focus on their own learning" (p. 4). It is believed by these presenters that if community

colleges are serious about shifting a focus to learning, a necessary consequence will be to learn more about learning and educating students. A focus on learning will force community college staff to learn and apply what is best known about learning. I think this will be an immediate positive result for both staff and students in community colleges.

How do community colleges make this transformation from teaching-centered institutions to learning-centered institutions and are there successful models for other institutions to follow? O'Banion (1995) offers detailed advice for community colleges that plan to move toward becoming "a learning college." He says first of all, develop your own language to reflect the new focus on learning rather than on instruction and teaching, then identify the barriers and limitations of traditional education models and work to develop definitions and frameworks for a desired learning paradigm. Further, the institution will need to realign current structures to accommodate collaboration and teamwork within the college community, review the role of technology in transforming the learning environment, and involve all institutional stakeholders in the change process. Finally, the institution must organize and review all activities related to these changes in the context of evaluation. He further adds that the president and/or chancellor must play a leading role in launching and nurturing the change process. "The CEO must guide and support this process over many years to achieve even a modicum of success" (p. 27).

In terms of examples to model, O'Banion (1996) studied three community colleges that have begun to create the "learning college." While these institutions have not completely achieved their goals, O'Banion says that they are "flagship" colleges that place learning first. The first institution, Lane Community College, is located in Eugene, Oregon. In 1993 it started a restructuring process which included the development of a new vision incorporating values and a

focus articulated in a language of learning. All instructional departments have been grouped into clusters that parallel the career strands in the state of Oregon's educational reform act and they have created a culture on the campus that centers around student learning. The second institution, Palomar College, is located in San Marcos, California. Since 1989 it has created a vision task force whose work led to shifting the college's mission from instruction to learning. Again, on this campus a culture and climate centered upon student learning permeates all of the policies, procedures, and operations of the institution. The third institution, Maricopa Community Colleges, is a system located in Phoenix, Arizona. Since 1989 this system has been one of 30 institutions of higher education in the Pew Higher Education Roundtables whose purpose was to assist colleges and universities in a restructuring process intended to address rapid change. Maricopa campuses have created numerous participation and communication opportunities for staff which have encouraged focusing on student learning and its improvement.

Easterling (1996) reported on another positive example of an institution that targeted the improvement of student learning as a central goal. Sinclair Community College in Dayton, Ohio in 1989 designed three assessment policies that focused on student learning: (a) mandatory assessment of degree and certificate seeking students' entry level basic skills in reading, writing, and math and subsequent placement; (b) mandatory summative assessment of degree and certificate seeking students' skills in their major; and (c) mandatory assessment of degree and certificate seeking students' general education skills. They added a fourth policy in 1992 which "guarantees" career graduates' performance as well as their transfer credits. Easterling says that for Sinclair, "learning" is the central mission of the college and they utilize six core indicators of success to measure that learning and determine if improvements are being made. Sinclair's

indicators are: providing students with access to success, promotion of lifelong learning, enhancing student development, sponsoring regional cooperation and leadership, providing quality workplace, and using resources prudently.

One final example of a community college which has been reported in the literature as making substantive progress toward shifting from a teaching to a learning institution is Howard Community College in Columbia, Maryland. Brock, Gardner, Linck and Matlick (1997) indicated that the college Board of Trustees encouraged and supported the use of accountability measures as a means to improve instruction and learning. Outcomes assessment is viewed as a means to an end--that end being improved learning. Maryland empowers each institution to fashion its own accountability program and the leadership at Howard Community College have created a comprehensive system which includes long- and short-term assessment of academic skills and projects related to specific courses, disciplines and programs. Overall, the goal at this institution is outcomes assessment resulting in instructional improvement and increased student learning.

In the previous pages, I have examined in some detail the theory, intent, examples, and impact of a paradigm shift from a teaching to a learning college on a national scale. With that as a foundation, I will now focus the discussion on current processes related to assessment of student learning and accountability which impact the Illinois public community college system. The two mechanisms examined for this research project are Illinois' Priorities, Quality, and Productivity/Program Review process and the North Central Association's regional accreditation process. These processes are currently two of the primary formal systems in Illinois for documenting student learning, general assessment, and accountability in community colleges. I

believe an examination of the development and specific requirements of these systems can illustrate whether there is movement toward greater emphasis on the improvement of student learning in Illinois community colleges.

The origin and evolution of accountability in Illinois community colleges are commonly referred to under the general term, "program review." As a definition, Barak and Breier (1990) define program review as "the systematic and periodic application of modern evaluative techniques to educational programs" (p. 1). They also emphasize that this evaluation process is done against a standard set of criteria so that judgements can be made about a program's effectiveness. The Illinois Community College Board (1993), hereafter referred to as the ICCB, defines program review as "an evaluation process which includes all instructional programs, student services, and academic support programs utilizing, at a minimum, the evaluative criteria of program need, program cost, and program quality, as defined by each college" (p. 2).

Program review in Illinois community colleges has been an ongoing interest of legislators which dates back to 1965 with the passage of the Illinois Public Community College Act. However, for all the years prior to 1983, there is little evidence to indicate that program review was a critical process mandated by ICCB. Basically, each community college was independently required to develop and implement a program review and evaluation process to review its programs on a five-year cycle. (The importance of the five-year cycle was that it met the reporting requirements of Illinois Board of Higher Education and the federal Department of Adult Vocational-Technical Education). The ICCB, operating on a purely advisory capacity, did not choose to prescribe a system to the colleges; especially to the institutions which had long histories prior to the creation of the state community college system. Under this decentralized

program review system, most colleges conducted what ICCB termed as a "desk audit" of their programs. That is, a campus administrator essentially sat at a desk and using budget, enrollment, and local labor market data wrote the program review. There was no need to involve faculty and students directly in this process. It is also very important to note that the process was not standardized between colleges and there was no interest by ICCB to move toward standardization of program review for the period, 1965-1982. I would expect that under this type of program review structure, there was little incentive to direct attention to specifically assessing student learning. However, things began to change in 1982.

The ICCB established a task force in 1982 to examine the present program review system and come up with a recommendation for a more systematic and standardized system of program review for all community colleges. This task force was comprised of ICCB staff and several Chief academic officers of community colleges. After approximately one year of work they completed a proposal of newly developed standards and it was approved by the ICCB in 1983. Virginia McMillian, Deputy Director of Policy and Planning for the ICCB, said that ultimately ICCB's intent was to react and develop an improved system before the legislature took the initiative and tried to mandate a higher level of public accountability (personal communication, April 4, 1997).

The next major change in program review policy by ICCB came in 1989 when it adopted cost-effectiveness and accountability as one set of its major initiatives. "This initiative produced a report examining the cost-effectiveness of the system, created an awards program to recognize colleges for their cost-effectiveness efforts, and established statewide accountability measures" (Illinois Community College Board, 1993). This improvement, which was initiated by ICCB,

was similar to the change in 1983 and was an attempt to lessen the likelihood of the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) or the legislature mandating additional accountability measures.

The last stage in the development of program review in Illinois occurred in 1991 when the IBHE embarked on an initiative focusing on institutional mission and priority setting. The Priorities, Quality, and Productivity (PQP) initiative was a much broader program in which IBHE intended to encompass many more functions than the traditional program review. The goals of the PQP program are to invest in essential priorities, strengthen the quality of programs, and to reallocate funds to improve productivity. Program review is seen as a primary component of the PQP process. The results of program review would yield information about the need, cost, and quality of a program and that information would help an institution to assess the productivity and priority of a program. Similar to the other initiatives described above, IBHE's motivation was to improve public accountability for its funding as competition for public funds became more intense.

The Illinois Board of Higher Education, in addition to mandating the PQP program in 1991, has demonstrated its interest and influence regarding assessment of student learning in other ways. For example, the IBHE, which essentially has authority over the ICCB, reported in 1992 that the improvement of undergraduate education had been a state priority since September 1986 when the IBHE adopted the policies recommended by its Committee on the Study of Undergraduate Education. This report described the public university and community college progress in implementing IBHE policies. The policies call on these institutions to assess student achievement and review the undergraduate experience of their students. Among the general

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

conclusions drawn from efforts to improve learning and teaching from 1989 to 1992, the report indicated that public universities and community colleges had made a commendable start in implementing undergraduate review and assessment processes. In addition, the report said improvements to undergraduate education reported to date suggested greater emphasis on improving the "learning" side than the "teaching" side of the equation (Illinois Board of Higher Education, 1992). The report also articulated two purposes of assessment: (1) to strengthen academic standards and (2) to provide students with information on their learning progress so they can make decisions.

Although the present state-initiated student assessment and accountability measures in Illinois community colleges can be traced back to 1983 when ICCB established minimum standards, this has ensured that programs and services are evaluated on a regular basis only according to need, cost, and quality. This system does not require that the results of this review be utilized to improve student achievement or learning. In fact, Stecher et al. (1994), upon studying several states which were first to create accountability systems, indicated that it was rarely found that states or institutions were actually using assessments and reviews to improve their programs. Stecher and his colleagues recommended that states needed to begin to focus on using these systems for program improvement. In addition, Bragg (1995) studied outcomes assessment in postsecondary institutions and while she reported a number of factors which influenced the use of the results, none of the institutions studied mentioned using results to improve student learning. I think that regardless of the changes in the program review process in Illinois over the past fifteen years, there is still little evidence that this process has resulted in improved student learning. I think we need to look to the recent changes in the requirements of

the regional accreditation agency for Illinois public community colleges as the potential catalyst which begins to change this condition.

The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (NCA) is the accreditation agency for Illinois community colleges. Voluntary accreditation of public community colleges in Illinois by NCA has long been valued as a universal indicator of quality and commitment to institutional and program improvement. A recent history of the NCA indicates that the improvement of student learning has become a critical factor in the accreditation process. For example, in October 1989 the NCA Commission called on all of its affiliated institutions to develop institutional programs through which student academic achievement could be documented. With this 1989 action, the Commission made explicit that student academic achievement would become a critical component in assessing overall institutional effectiveness. The Commission called on institutions to structure an assessment plan and program around the institution's stated mission and purposes. Further, the Commission affirmed, ". . . the importance of assessment of student academic achievement and its potential impact on strengthening the teaching provided by institutions and the learning achieved by their students" (North Central Association, 1994, p. 151). Ultimately the goal of the Commission's initiative on assessment of student academic achievement was to ensure that all of its affiliated institutions enact a program for assessment that is defined by and implemented through a comprehensive assessment plan. "The Commission has determined that unless institutionalized through a formal institutional assessment plan, assessment of student academic achievement will not become part of the institution's basic educational culture even if it might pervade the culture of some departments or schools within the institution" (North Central

Association, p. 155).

The next step toward greater emphasis on improving student learning occurred in 1991-1992 when the Commission initiated a reexamination of its policies, procedures, requirements, and criteria. The Commission adopted a new mission statement, revised its Criteria for Accreditation and General Institutional Requirements, developed a new candidacy program, and completed a major revision of the policies on approval of institutional change and public discourse. "These developments resulted in the first major restructuring of the Handbook of Accreditation in more than ten years" (North Central Association, p. 3). As a result of this restructuring, NCA announced in that colleges scheduled for comprehensive evaluation visits after 1995-96 would be required to submit to NCA an Academic Assessment Plan. This would be a highly detailed plan which is specifically required to detail how the college will identify and document student achievement and--more important--the plan must indicate the actions the institution will take when improvement is called for (North Central Association, 1994). Crosby's comment about quality improvement is appropriate is this case: "It is not what you find, but what you do with what you find" (p. 65). A prescriptive requirement for accountability and improvement of student learning further validates that it had become a higher priority for NCA. Prior to this new requirement, Hoey (1993) found NCA to have the least specific guidelines for program review, assessment, and overall institutional effectiveness as compared to the other five regional accreditation bodies for community colleges. Hoey also found that community colleges within the NCA accreditation region reported the least amount of usage of assessment and program review results as compared to the other accreditation regions.

For Illinois community colleges, assessment of student academic achievement--at least

for the purpose of accreditation--would now incorporate evidence of student learning, for the purpose of improving that learning. Indeed, as Murphy and Harrold (1997) claim, "The bottom line is learning; the purpose is improving that learning" (p. 55). Assessment for NCA's purposes would require measurement of learning outcomes with the purpose of that assessment being documentable student academic achievement to use for improvement.

The methods portion of this project involved semi-structured interviews with college staff at two rural Illinois community colleges and an examination of a number of documents which each college developed to guide and direct their institutions' operations. The intent in both the interviews and the document review was to determine each college's perceptions and opinions on the general topic of improving student learning. For the purpose of this project, I will use the pseudonyms, Alpha Community College and Beta Community College to designate the two institutions studied. I have included as appendices both the letter of consent (see Appendix A) and list of questions used in the interviews conducted (see Appendix B) at Alpha and Beta community colleges. Again, my overall intent was to determine each institution's progress and ideas on the subject of improving student learning. Specifically I want to determine, from their perspective if student learning was being improved at their college and if so, how? What evidence exists to support the claim that it is? Was there a movement present which could be interpreted as moving their institution from a teaching centered institution to a learning centered institution?

At Alpha Community College, I was able to conduct semi-structured interviews with five administrators and four faculty members. Virtually all of the comments offered by these people referred me to a number of documents which the college has carefully developed over the past

several years to guide the direction and development of the institution. These documents are, the college Mission Statement, the Continuous Quality Improvement Goal Statements, the Strategic Long-Range Plan, and the NCA-approved North Central Association Assessment Plan.

To begin with, Alpha Community College is located in a small town in east-central Illinois and has been offering educational services since 1945. It has a long history of education and economic development to its district residents and its campus is presently undergoing a thirty-two million-dollar renovation. Alpha Community College employs 212 full-time faculty and staff and serves approximately 3,000 students each semester earning close to 55,000 credit hours per academic year. This college can best be described as in the midst of exploring and implementing a number of different governance, administrative, and planning practices.

Let me begin the description of information found at Alpha Community College by describing its mission statement and goals. It was published in the last Alpha Community College NCA Self-Study of 1988 that there is considerable concern that there had been no recent effort at that time to examine the institution's mission and purposes since they were first published. "This fundamental expression of the College's beliefs has not been revised or affirmed in more than twenty years" (Looking Forward, 1988, p. 28). This Self-Study recommended that the college's mission and purposes statements be carefully examined and affirmed or revised as necessary and this process would commence in September 1988. A revision was completed in Fall 1991 which essentially eliminated the first sentence of the statement of philosophy and retained the rest of the mission statement as previously written. In addition, prior to this revision, the college was guided by a statement of objectives and a statement of functions. Those two sections were combined to result in a statement of purpose

which delineates the same information but in a less redundant format. I found it very interesting that both the earlier and current versions of the mission statement and purposes for Alpha Community College do not use the words teaching or learning at all. A similar finding was reported by Barr (cited in O'Banion, 1995) who said "It is revealing that virtually every mission statement contained in the catalogs of California's 107 community colleges fail to use the word 'learning' in its statement of purpose" (p. 25). When Alpha Community College staff were asked about the mission statement and the lack of inclusion of the terms learning and teaching, their response was that a revision of the mission statement is expected as part of the present NCA self-study process. None of the staff interviewed expressed any sense of urgency in reviewing the mission and goals for the college.

My interview with one of the Deans and the President at Alpha Community College revealed much more about the mission of the college. The Dean indicated that the college currently has a president that is very interested and committed to student learning. However, this Dean perceived that this interest is focused upon documenting student learning in a detailed manner so that data can be collected on a regular basis to determine if improvement in learning is occurring. Indeed, when the President was interviewed he confirmed this commitment by saying "Grades mean very little. We need to have measurable objectives and competencies that the teacher will sign off on that indicate the skills and knowledge that a graduate has" (interview, May 2, 1997). I found the President to be very focused upon outcomes and he considers intake assessment and exit assessment as powerful tools to document student learning. He also expects the comparison of these data from year to year will provide evidence of improvement. The President and Dean further indicated that staff development funds in the future would be directed

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

to teaching the faculty about alternative assessment methods. They both also predicted that the college's present interest in student retention would become involved with student learning. They both thought that if students felt better about their learning, they would be more likely to persist and achieve their educational goals.

Another document referred to by many of those interviewed was the Continuous Quality Improvement Goal statements. The Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process at Alpha Community College began in 1992 as an outgrowth of a comprehensive workforce development project. A panel of 30 campus representatives was initially formed to improve the curriculum in order to meet the local workforce needs of employers. However, after a number of meetings, the group concluded that a process for improving and ensuring quality across the campus must first be implemented prior to focusing on external workforce needs. After researching a number of quality initiatives at other community colleges, the group conducted a Quality Improvement Profile (QIP) assessment of all full-time faculty and staff and the Board of Trustees. The instrument was designed to highlight opportunity areas for improvement. The results indicated there were a number of areas where current level of service or activity did not correspond with the College's expectations. Based upon this data, the initial group decided that the principles of continuous improvement needed to be implemented on campus. After initial training in continuous improvement tools and techniques, nine Continuous Improvement Teams were established to address the major opportunity areas identified by the QIP document: student/customers, institutional planning, leadership, continuous improvement/productivity, support/communication, learning/training, working with others/team building, curriculum, and financial resources.

A Steering Team developed a mission statement to incorporate the aims of the CQI process. It reads, "[Alpha Community College] will strive, through continuous improvement, to exceed the expectations of the people we serve. The College is committed to: providing the very best educational opportunities; responding to the needs of the communities we serve; creating and maintaining a quality workplace" (CIT Plan, 1993, p. 5). I found it interesting that, as in the college's mission statement, there is no use of the words teaching or learning in this statement.

There are, however, specific references to improving student learning when focus groups later defined their specific goals. For example, the goal of the Curriculum Focus Group was, "To improve the teaching/learning process while improving institutional accountability and assessment." The goal of the Student/Customer Focus Group was, "To place service to students and customers as the College's number one priority" (CIT Plan, 1993, p. 8).

The next document which Alpha Community College administrative staff referred to was the Long Range Strategic Plan. It should be noted that none of the faculty interviewed made reference to this Plan. However, the President and vice president mentioned that this document contained a number of references to improving student learning. Indeed, Goal II, Strategy #1 states, "The College will establish measurements to improve the quality of programs and services." The activities which describe the means to accomplish that strategy include establishing quality measures for all programs and services, evaluating and ensuring that all programs and services meet and exceed quality measures, and utilizing a consultant to help develop quality measures for all programs. In addition, Goal IV states, "The college will provide an environment conducive to teaching, learning, and working." One could question the impact and potential of this plan considering that none of the faculty interviewed had much recollection

of its development and content.

College administrators frequently talked about PQP/Program Review as evidence that they were striving to improve student learning. One of the Deans said that, "The actual review process itself starts in each department, division, office, and/or classroom. Faculty, staff, and administrators all take an active part in assessing, reviewing, and prioritizing their services and programs" (personal interview, May 9, 1997). The Institutional Accountability office helps coordinate the entire PQP/Program Review initiative, but I was advised that the actual "work" is completed throughout the different departments on campus. Each department/division completes in-depth reviews, utilizing several need, cost, and quality indicators to identify areas of strength and weakness. In addition, I was told that the PQP/Program Review initiative was a key factor in the College's planning and priority-setting process. For example, as the College developed the Long-Range Strategic Plan, the collection of institutional data used in PQP/Program Review was utilized as a portion of the foundation of the plan. It is interesting to note that Alpha Community College reported as priority statements in its last PQP/Program Review report for 1996 the following:

> "1) Encourage excellence in all programs and services-establish outcome measurements for each program;
> 2) Identify and exceed the expectations of students and stakeholders-further refine and improve survey and follow-up system for gathering student perceptions and expectations;
> 3) Improve the environment for working, teaching and learning;
> 4) Increase retention and improve student success rates-develop a campus-wide enrollment/retention plan to increase student success,
> 5) Modify campus programs and services based on student/shareholder expectations and needs" (p. 71).

Finally, college officials continuously referred to the approved NCA Assessment Plan.

Twenty-five faculty members of a total full-time teaching staff of fifty-four, provided in-depth input into the development of the College's Assessment Plan. These faculty served on the Steering Team and/or one of the sub-committees which studied the individual instructional functions of the College's mission. The overall intent of the Assessment Plan is best summarized as follows: "The development and subsequent implementation of this Assessment Plan at [Alpha Community College] has afforded the institution a formalized means by which the College can routinely collect consistent information with respect to student academic achievement which assists the College in making sound decisions to continuously improve the teaching/learning process" (p. 1). Clearly, the faculty who were interviewed for this project made frequent reference to this NCA Assessment Plan.

In the development of this Assessment Plan, Alpha Community College officials reported using a simplistic conceptual framework to assist the various committees and subcommittees with the identification of appropriate assessment measures and processes. First, subcommittees were advised to identify the specific skills and/or knowledge students are expected to master/learn and then select assessment measures which assess the identified learning outcomes. They were advised to keep in mind that information gained from assessment must be utilized to identify course and/or program strengths and weaknesses. Identified weaknesses would be addressed through means which, ultimately, lead to improvement in the teaching/learning process. In addition the Plan called for the assessment results per individual student would be shared with the respective student to support and enhance the student's individual academic performance at the College. "The College's Assessment Plan is a formalized means by which student academic progress information can be collected and evaluated on a consistent basis,

strengths and weaknesses can be identified, and ultimately sound decisions can be made with respect to improving the teaching/learning process" (Assessment Plan of Student Academic Achievement, 1995, p. 31).

While all the college officials interviewed at Alpha Community College were in agreement with the conceptual value of improving student learning, they were not in agreement with specific ways it had been accomplished lately. Rather, they seemed to center their comments on the fact that plans are being developed to meet this objective, best practices sites are being studied, and regional and national experts have been brought to campus. There does not appear to be a consensus, however, on how to make the improvement of learning occur. The NCA Assessment Plan does provide a blueprint for detailed assessment of learning. However, what it does not do is specifically describe how changes are to be made to improve learning. Indeed, "The ultimate goal of the College's Assessment Plan is to improve the teaching/learning process thereby increasing student learning. The Plan affords the College a formalized means by which student achievement information is collected and evaluated on a consistent basis, course and curriculum strengths and weaknesses are identified, and subsequently areas of concern are addressed through course, curriculum and/or program modifications" (p. 32).

Is there a change of paradigm at Alpha Community College? Is there an increased emphasis on improving student learning? My impression, after an examination of this institution's documents and staff responses to interview questions, is that a movement toward greater emphasis on student learning is occurring. Faculty, having completed quality training, talked about meeting the needs of the customer (student). They mostly defined the improvement of student learning from the context of their own classrooms and experiences with CQI

committees. Administrators talked about the NCA Assessment Plan, the PQP/Program Review, and the Long Range Strategic Plan as indicators of an emphasis on student learning. Thus, both the faculty and administration are talking about student learning but in different venues.

The interviews conducted at Beta Community College were designed with the expectation that I would collect responses to the same questions asked of Alpha Community College staff. Although this did occur as planned, I was unable to meet with the President due to scheduling conflicts. However, I was able to spend a full day on the campus of Beta Community College interviewing a total of seven faculty members and administrators. These interviews were conducted with the purpose of recording each person's knowledge, involvement, and opinions regarding the assessment and improvement of student learning as evidenced in PQP/Program Review, NCA Assessment Plan, and NCA Accreditation.

To begin with, Beta Community College is located in a rural setting in north-central Illinois and was founded in 1924. It has a rich history of service to its district residents and its main campus is presently located in a sprawling twenty-million dollar facility. Beta Community College employs 338 full-time faculty and staff and serves approximately 4,400 students each semester earning close to 71,000 credit hours per academic year. This college can best be described as in the midst of a significant cultural transformation.

Last year Beta Community College's Board of Trustees hired a new president following the retirement of the previous president after he served for more than 20 years in that position. Then, one of the early challenges for the new president was to locate and hire a new Vice-President for Academic Affairs when the previous one was hired as a president at another Illinois community college. By itself, one could argue the replacement of the two highest administrative

positions within a single year can have an immediate impact on the culture of an institution. However, what makes this situation even more unique is that both of these new leaders are female. Normally I would not consider this to be especially significant but I was informed that Beta Community College had no history of any females ever serving in senior leadership positions. Given this scenario, the employees interviewed at the college collectively indicated that the institution was entering a new era.

The staff I interviewed on the campus described the former administration as very autocratic. They said the past administration did not use inclusion, team building, and information sharing as part of its operating practices. The new administration, however, was described as completely different. It was characterized as open, receptive to input, encouraging participation, and very team oriented. It is within this environment that I conducted my descriptive research.

The day I was on campus to interview staff for this project, I found a college staff that was very eager to share information and opinions. They were also interested in finding out how other colleges were addressing the kinds of issues they were facing. They indicated that for as long as they could remember they were not given the opportunity to participate in the planning and development of campus reports and projects such as Program Review and the NCA Self-Study. In the past these projects were completed by the senior administration with little input from faculty, staff, and mid-level administrators. Therefore, much of what I share below in terms of responses to my interview questions are indirect answers and information which I was able to assemble by studying documents given to me by college staff and comments from various faculty members and administrators.

Beta Community College is currently in the process of preparing their Self-Study Report for the purpose of North Central Association accreditation. The last NCA visit and subsequent accreditation occurred in 1987. The Director of Institutional Research indicated that the previous Self-Study was a closed process and very few individuals on campus were given the opportunity to provide input. In fact, access to data and information used in the Self-Study was significantly limited both prior to the visitation and after the ten-year accreditation was awarded. As evidence of this restriction, those presently involved with the NCA Self-Study only recently were made aware that there were eleven recommendations from the 1987 visitation. (Since most staff were unaware of the content of those recommendations, there is little documented activity to report on those recommendations in the present Self-Study report).

The faculty and staff talked about the structure of the current NCA Self-Study process consisting of ten subcommittees and one assessment subcommittee all of which involve many people on campus. The Self-Study process is led by four self-study coordinators: one in charge of organization, two co-coordinators responsible for the subcommittees, and one student member. When asked how the area of student learning and its improvement will fit into the NCA process most did not offer any responses directly to the question. Rather, they focused their comments on their growing understanding of the NCA criterion process. In addition, most of the staff interviewed had little firsthand knowledge of the NCA Assessment Plan which was written by the former administration. It was rejected by NCA as not meeting their minimum requirements and will have to be revised and included in the Self-Study report to be submitted to NCA.

The new Vice-President for Academic Affairs was able to share some of the history of the

Assessment Plan. She indicated that Beta Community College has long been known for its faculty evaluation system. Every full-time faculty member is observed/evaluated at least three times per semester; twice by the appropriate division chair and once by a person from the Office of Academic Affairs. She indicated that historically, this system has resulted in considerable strengthening of the teaching skills of the faculty. In fact, previous college administrators contend that this focus on faculty evaluation has provided them with an unusually strong teaching team. College officials made this faculty evaluation system the cornerstone of their previously rejected Assessment Plan, proposing that student learning would naturally be improved if teaching was closely monitored and improved. NCA officials disagreed with that proposal and asked that a revised Assessment Plan be submitted with the Self-Study report.

When asked about ways that the college assesses student learning, most responses were centered on what individual faculty members do in their respective classrooms. There was no awareness of any campus or division-wide attempt at addressing assessment and student learning. However, several of the Division Chairs have indicated interest in using K. Patricia Cross's classroom evaluation process in their academic divisions.

On the subject of PQP/Program review, I was informed that in the past it was completed by senior administration without any faculty or student involvement. However, this year's PQP/Program Review report is involving many staff and several observations were offered during the interviews. For example, the Humanities division chair indicated that he has directed his faculty to rewrite course outlines to clearly state student outcomes. Other examples mentioned by Beta Community College staff that are related to student learning include placement testing that is required for all degree and certificate students in reading, English, and

mathematics, Occupational Competency Guarantees are available to qualifying students, writing across the disciplines continues to be a college commitment, and a study abroad program in England, Austria, and Costa Rica continues to be very popular for some students.

Overall, I think the best information and evidence offered by Beta Community College staff which related to improving student learning was the new college vision statement, revised mission statement, and revised college purposes. The development of these was initiated by the new president and was the result of a lengthy process which included input from many staff, students, and district residents. The college held town meetings where community members were asked: What are your perceptions of [Beta Community College]? How well are we doing what we are doing? What are your needs? A 10% random sample (431) of students - were sent copies of the proposed new mission statements for reaction. A 28% response rate provided input into the process. The college even had announcements in the newspaper and radio soliciting input into the development of the vision, mission, and purposes.

The new Vision Statement is: "[Beta] Community College strives to be a distinguished teaching and learning community. We lead by providing exceptional academic and career programs, culturally enriching experiences and economic development opportunities." Since there was no previous vision statement for the college and this one contains a direct reference to teaching and learning, it indicates to me a commitment and focus to that end.

The new Mission Statement reads: "[Beta] Community College serves the needs of the learner and our diverse community by providing quality education, training and services that are accessible, affordable and promote lifelong learning." When compared to the old mission statement below, this new mission statement, in my opinion, focuses on the learner. The old

mission statement reads:

> "[Beta] Community College, established in 1924, is a comprehensive and diverse educational institution serving the educational and training needs of the people of District [001]. It is the belief of the college that every student is entitled to quality teaching and quality learning opportunities. [Beta] Community College maintains excellence in teaching, offers a variety of curricula and services designed to stimulate intellectual and physical growth, and fosters social and emotional maturity and civic consciousness" (College catalog, 1996, p. 2).

There is also a new list of Valued Practices that has been developed in conjunction with the new vision and mission statements. These include, in random order,

> "1) Employees and Volunteers 2) Public Trust 3) Partnerships 4) Diversity 5) Students 6) Teaching and learning - We offer quality teaching and encourage lifelong learning to prepare responsible citizens. We continually explore teaching and learning opportunities created by evolving research and technology. Further, instruction and learning outcomes are actively assessed to insure our high standards."

My overall impression of Beta Community College is one of excitement and pride. I interviewed a group of people who have worked within a very autocratic management system for many years but are now beginning an era of new, open, and participatory governance. Even though these staff members worked within a system which did not solicit their input or rejected their ideas when offered, these professionals are eager to contribute and participate in this new administration's governance. I was left with a sense of excitement and anticipation in these people's words and deeds which indicate to me that students and residents will be experiencing many positive developments in the near future.

How does Beta Community College compare to the experts' claims in terms of shifting a focus from teaching to learning? I asked this question to all that I interviewed and one response stands out. A Division chair said that this question assumes that there was an emphasis on

teaching at Beta Community College. He said the past cannot support such a claim but the future certainly is very promising for both teaching and learning. I think, armed with a new vision, mission, and valued practices, they are positioned to take advantage of the opportunities to improve student learning. If you look at the institutions that O'Banion studied and indicated were benchmark institutions with regard to improving student learning, they all began with a commitment in terms of vision and mission focused on learning. It would appear to me that Beta Community College has completed this most important first step. They have declared teaching and learning to be a priority and now should begin to move their organization in a positive direction.

What is the status of community colleges in Illinois in terms of shifting their paradigm from teaching institutions to learning institutions? I did not find a simple answer to that question. From the system-wide perspective of the ICCB and the IBHE, I found that there is a trend toward greater accountability as discussed in this paper. I think it is reasonable to expect that this accountability will continue to be focused on assessment of student learning--outcomes assessment. I consider that as the most visible and tangible mode of accountability which can be understood by legislators and the general public. However, the extent to which the state uses that information to make comparisons from year to year could be the beginning of a process to examine and require the improvement of student learning. Before Illinois can make progress on improving student learning it first must become diligent in the collection of data which can clearly document student learning.

Alpha and Beta Community Colleges both indicate a greater attention to student learning now than in the past. Alpha Community College is focusing on outcomes assessment and

documenting student learning while Beta Community College is focusing on changing the culture of the institution to a learning-centered focus. Both institutions have indicated a desire to direct more attention to student learning and based upon the institutions studied by O'Banion, this is a very important first step. That is, beginning to use the language of student learning as a common theme which permeates the vision, mission, and goals of an institution.

Finally, I think the NCA regional accreditation process will provide a source of pressure on individual community colleges to develop systems and processes that will provide evidence of improving student learning. I would hope that because colleges will be developing plans and procedures to meet this requirement that the ICCB and IBHE will capitalize on this effort and incorporate it into PQP/Program Review.

In summary, I think the increased attention to student learning in Illinois community colleges is substantial, growing, but not yet a paradigm shift as described by O'Banion and others. There has been an evolution of the PQP/Program Review process and the NCA accreditation process which has moved institutions closer to focusing on student learning but those processes alone will not cause colleges to make a complete shift. Rather, individual institutions will need to examine their vision, mission, and goals in light of student learning and determine what their focus will be.

References

Barr, R. B. (1993). From teaching to learning: A new reality for community colleges. Leadership Abstracts, 8(3), 2.

Barr, R. B., & Tagg, J. (1995). From teaching to learning - A new paradigm for undergraduate education. Change, 13-25.

Boggs, G. R. (1996). The learning paradigm. Community College Journal, 66(3), 24-27.

Bragg, D. D. (1995). Assessing postsecondary vocational-technical outcomes: What are the alternatives? Journal of Vocational Education Research, 20 (4), 15-39.

Brock, G., Gardner, M., Linck, H., & Matlick, M. (1997, January). Outcomes assessment as a paradigm for learning. Paper presented at the Learning Paradigm Conference, San Diego, CA.

Commission on the Future of Community Colleges. (1988). Building communities: A vision for a new century. Washington, DC: American Association of Community Colleges.

Crosby, P. B. (1979). Quality is Free. New York, NY: New American Library.

Danville Area Community College (1988, July). Looking forward: The final report of an institutional self-study conducted for the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Danville, IL: Author.

Danville Area Community College (1993, July). Continuous Improvement Team plan summary. Danville, IL: Author.

Danville Area Community College (1993, August). Program review report - 1993. Danville, IL: Author.

Danville Area Community College (1995). Assessment Plan of Student Academic

Achievement. Danville, IL: Author.

Danville Area Community College (1995). Long-Range Strategic Plan: July 1, 1995 - June 30, 1998. Danville, IL: Author.

Danville Area Community College (1996, July). Priorities, quality, & productivity/program review at Danville Area Community College - Fiscal year 1996. Danville, IL: Author.

DeWitt, K., Leisey, V. D., & Reinhardt, L. (1996). Transfer advisement at one community college: Integrating technology, initiatives and programs for increased student learning. Westminster, MD: Carroll Community College.

Easterling, D. (1996, March). Creating the link between institutional effectiveness and assessment. Paper presented at the Annual meeting of the North Central Association, Chicago, IL.

Gabelnick, F., MacGregor, J., Matthews, R. S., & Smith, B. L. (1990). Learning communities: Creating connections among students, faculty and disciplines. New Directions in Learning, no. 41. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Harlacher, E. L., & Gollattscheck, J. F. (1992). Building learning communities. Community College Review, 20(3), 29-36.

Helminski, L. (1995). Research: Current best practices for the desired learning paradigm. Final report and summary. Phoenix, AZ: Maricopa County Community College.

Hoey, J. J. (1993). The utility of academic program review: An examination of organizational factors and their impact on usage of program review results at single-campus community colleges in the United States. Dissertation Abstracts International, 54 (03), 788.

(University Microfilms No. AAC93-20807)

Hudgins, J. L. (1996, April). Seize the opportunity. Paper presented at the Annual Presidents' Breakfast of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development, Atlanta, Georgia.

Illinois Community College Board. (1993, December). Community college PQP/Program review guide. Springfield, IL: Author.

Illinois Community College Board (1995). Accountability and productivity report for the Illinois community college system. Springfield, IL: Author.

Illinois Community College Board (1996). Accountability and productivity report for the Illinois community college system. Springfield, IL: Author.

Illinois Valley Community College (1996). College catalog - 1995-1997. Oglesby, IL: Author.

Kuh, G. D., Douglas, K. B., Lund, J. P., & Ramin-Gyurnek, J. (1994). Student learning outside the classroom: Transcending artificial boundaries. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 8. Washington, DC: The George Washington University, School of Education and Human Development.

Love, P. G., & Love, A. G. (1995). Enhancing student learning - Intellectual, social, and emotional integration. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 4. Washington, DC: The George Washington University, Graduate School of Education and Human Development.

Moore, B., Rousso, E. G., & Clausen, J. (1997, January). Shifting paradigms using outcomes assessment - A systemic case study. Paper presented at the Learning Paradigm Conference, San Diego, CA.

Murphy, P. D., & Harrold, R. L. (1997) Assessment: A moving target with rising expectations. In A Collection of Papers on Self-Study and Institutional Improvement 1997. Chicago, IL: Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

Myran, G., Zeiss, T., & Howdyshell, L. (1995). Community college leadership in the new century: Learning to improve learning. Washington, DC: American Association of Community Colleges.

National Commission on Time and Learning. (1994, April). Prisoners of time. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

North Central Accreditation Steering Team. (1988). Looking forward: The final report of an institutional self-study conducted for the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Danville, IL: Danville Area Community College.

North Central Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. (1994). Handbook of accreditation 1994-96. Chicago, IL: Author.

O'Banion, T. (Ed.). (1994). Teaching & learning in the community college. Washington, DC: American Association of Community Colleges.

O'Banion, T. (1995). Community colleges lead a learning revolution. Educational Record, 76(4), 23-27.

O'Banion, T. (1996). A learning college for the 21st century. Community College Journal, 66(3), 18-23.

O'Banion, T. (1997). Innovation and educational reform. Academic Leadership, 4(2), 4-

11.

State of Illinois Board of Higher Education. (1992) Undergraduate education: Learning and teaching (ILSBHE-8). Springfield, IL: Illinois State Board of Higher Education.

State of Illinois Board of Higher Education (1996, November). Illinois priorities, quality, and productivity initiative - 1995-1996 Summary and assessment and recommendations for 1996-1997. Springfield, IL: Author.

Stecher, B. M., Hanser, L. M., Hallmark, B., Rahn, M. L., Levesque, K., Hoachlander, D. E., & Klein, S. G. (1994). Improving Perkins II performance measures and standards - Lessons learned from early implementers in four states (MDS-732). Berkeley, CA: University of California at Berkeley, National Center for Research in Vocational Education.

Victor, L. J., Jensen, R., Cook, B., & Taylor, L. (1997, January). Learners for quality education. Paper presented at the Learning Paradigm Conference, San Diego, CA.

Wingspread Group on Higher Education. (1993). An American imperative: Higher expectations for higher education. Racine, WI: Johnson Foundation, Inc.